

Influence of Teachers Orientation on Podcast Utilisation in Schools

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Abstract

This study critically investigate the teachers' orientation of podcast in schools and in order to achieve this an "Inward" framework for podcast orientation was designed. However, the tutors' orientation was found to vary in countries because of their different "Religious, Political, Social and Cultural" background. Although, this observation was drawn from very short literature review, it was recommended that further study should provide an empirical support for these views. Also, the use of podcast was assumed to be a concern of the Federal, State Government and school authorities too.

Keywords: Teachers', Podcast, Utilisation and Schools

1. Introduction

The use of instructional technologies have always been viewed as a tedious issue in some developing countries as caused by many factors. Although, it was observed that some authors have made efforts in studying few aspects like the teachers' attitude while some did investigation on perception of instructional materials (Domingo and Gargante 2016; Pandey 2016). However, my choice of the word "Orientation" is peculiar to a Nigerian context and draws from my personal experiences as a teacher with witness to numerous events on the job. Also, in order to get a better understanding an "Inward" framework is adapted to allow for a clearer analysis of the study, which is more detailed in literature review.

Let me stress that the use of podcast have demerits and merits. Firstly, a research noted that some teachers' view this technology as time consuming to prepare in schools because the production of a standard podcast may require script drafting, voicing and recording with special software in a studio to mention few (Akşan and Eryilmaz 2011). Although, the benefits of podcast are as follows. For example, in the literature review it was found to provide additional support to the learners' instruction (O'Bannon *et al.* 2011; Matava *et al.* 2013; MacDonald, Kellam and Peirce 2013). Likewise, it was noted that it gives leverage to educational institutions that use the podcast for classroom activities (Siguaw *et al.* 2006). This should also be beneficial to the Federal, State Government and education administrators. Despite, these advantages one may begin to wonder on the nature of teacher "Orientation" in Nigeria.

After, critical literature review and relevant discussions in this article, short conclusions and recommendations shall be made based on the findings. Let me emphasise that from this short investigation the educators' level of "Orientation" seems to vary in countries. This assumption is not final because of the few information gathered so far in this research. Notwithstanding, further empirical study is required.

2. Brief Literature Review

2.1 What is a Podcast?

This media have been explained by various scholars in different manner. In the first place a podcast is defined as an online digital media that appeals to the sense of hearing and seeing in which headphones or speakers are required to hear and view its contents (Stoten 2007; MacDonald *et al.* 2013). Additionally, this media was found to exist online in the form of video or audio resources for several purposes (McGarr 2009; Smythe and Neufeld 2010; Kay 2012). Similarly, McGarr noted further that "Video podcasts refer to files that are distributed in a digital format on the internet by using personal computers or mobile devices", that has sharable and downloadable characteristic and allow users easy access (Ibid). Moreover, "the core content of podcasting is audio, which is not new to education" (Edirisingha *et al.* 2007). Notwithstanding, by combining the video and audio properties the contents of the podcast would appeal to both the eyes and ears, which is a richer content than audio.

2.1.1 Why Podcast?

My participation in a workshop on emerging technologies in year 2013, which had lots of practical activities inspired me a lot. During the programme some group presentation on selected topics were prepared and delivered with a podcast. Also, this was a rare opportunity and as a lecturer it became quite interesting area for research. So, my thinking became inclined along this path because of the gap to fill in a developing world context. Let me recall that in year 1994 while studying in a high school in Ekiti State, there were no instructional technologies used for instruction. Also, teaching and learning activities from my understanding recently in some high schools in my locality, which is Ekiti State seems to still require some upgrading to World standard. This is occurring when some institutions of learning in developed countries engage students with modern media like

podcast as a means to achieve the frontiers of learning (Mitra *et al.* 2005; Facer 2011; Dolan *et al.* 2013). Some examples of such school in UK are Newcastle University and Academy that incorporates new media for instructional activities.

Also, in reminiscence of a particular taught module known as the “Future of Learning” that was led by Mitra in Newcastle University in the year 2015. During the lessons there were certain class sessions that integrated podcast as a teaching and learning tool for “Self Organised Learning Environments” (SOLEs), which required the lecturer to deliver audio instruction online from a distant location. This infer that in some years to come the teachers’ physical presence may not be required in classroom because of the growth in the use of digital products (Mitra *et al.* 2005; O’Bannon *et al.* 2011). However, Mitra said that learning technologies should not “Replace a good teacher”. Also, this may imply that it could replace a bad educator. Then, my view is that learning technologies are generally good if adequately monitored by teachers.

2.1.3 *Advantages and Disadvantages of Podcast*

Several studies have identified podcast as advantageous to education for various reasons. Firstly, the use of this instructional technology is innovative because it brings into the school system new ideas that promotes the dynamics of instruction (Freeman 1994; Lawless and Anderson 1996; Eisenhardt and Brown 1999; Edirisingha *et al.* 2007). Similarly, this media was found to give “Competitive Advantage” to schools in a developed World (Siguaw *et al.* 2006). Also, some of these research evidence noted that it provides support for the students’ revision after a long period (O’Bannon *et al.* 2011; Matava *et al.* 2013; MacDonald *et al.* 2013). Likewise, an example of this material is the Newcastle University Recap technology that records audio visuals of live lectures, which are made available online for students. So, the learners have the opportunity to do a quick revision by accessing it on the internet (Ibid). Empirical evidence revealed that “Sixty Percent (60%)” of some tertiary education students tend to use podcast as medium for course contents delivery in a Western domain (Swanson 2012; Matava *et al.* 2013).

However, the reverse is the case in some Nigeria schools environment because there is call for the use of cheap resources for classroom teaching rather than the use of podcast technologies (Okobia 2011; Olayinka 2016). For instance by reflecting on my job encounters in year 2011, while teaching, in which the students’ were not allowed to own mobile phones, yet they used to smuggle some into their hostel for their use. Although, times without number the school management did arrange for a means to arrest culprits of such acts because it was assumed to cause poor academic performance. In my opinion, this would make the students and teachers orientation of educational technologies poor if compared with those of the advanced Nations.

Nonetheless, a standard podcast production and utilisation could be challenging. This is owing to the fact that its preparation takes a lot of time, especially in places with poor Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (Akşan and Eryilmaz 2011). For this reason teachers’ require adequate patience when expected to make use of this technology. In addition, the utilisation of supporting media like internet for this podcast was discovered to be affected negatively by “Teachers Attitude” (Albrini 2006; Aksan and Eryilmaz 2011; Kretschmann 2015). Likewise, in the United Kingdom (UK) it was reported that lecturers have positive attitude towards instructional technologies with “Ninety Six Percent 96%” of users stating to have used podcast enabling technologies in classroom activities (Shelton 2014). Let me stress that the internet is a way of life in the UK unlike the developing countries. So, the teachers’ and learners’ get used to it at a very tender age.

2.1.4 *Teachers Orientation for Podcast*

The word orientation has been defined by different authors’ with so many views. According to the Cambridge dictionary orientation is defined as “Particular things that a person prefers, believes, thinks or usually does”. This implies that orientation could be personal to someone because it is a decision drawn from a way of life. For instance, every new undergraduate students require campus orientation to familiarise himself or herself with the environment. So, the teachers’ orientation is their “Religious, Political, Social and Cultural” background (Liu 2010; Hsu and Burns 2012; Ho *et al.* 2015; Grina *et al.* 2016). From the religious aspect and tutors orientation “Religion is viewed as one of the most stable social forces in shaping and controlling an individual’s life and behaviour” (Kennedy and Lawton 1998; Chen and Liu 2009). For instance, among other religions the most publicly practiced are Christianity and Islam in Nigeria.

However, a “High level of religiosity in individuals has been related to a greater concern for the welfare of others” in a country (Clary and Snyder 1991). If religion orientation affects the “Welfare” of some people, then it could influence the use of certain instructional materials. Consequently, my concern is more technological and some educators’ from my personal experiences tend to associate the internet with evil because of their “High Level of Religiosity” irrespective of affiliation. Their orientation of the internet media is that it could expose the students’ to prurient contents, thereby making them wanting to practice the acts at a tender age in Nigeria. This retards the teachers’ ability to quickly master the use of learning technologies for teaching. Notwithstanding, in a developed World context like UK the teachers’ religious orientation have little to do with the learners’ use of cyberspace. So, it speeds up their mastery of the use of modern day media for instruction delivery.

Subsequently, a brief look at teachers’ political orientation in Nigeria as an element that affects their use

of podcast. For instance, some political agenda by parties are meant to promote the use of technologies, while others do not seem to focus on this issue. Let me recall that in year 2013 in Ekiti State, Nigeria, the then state Government mandated it for all the high school teachers' to have personal computers. As an educational technologist this was unique to me because it served as a means to encourage the teachers' to design and develop instructional technologies for classroom activities regardless of political orientation. This agrees with the idea of Hirsh *et al.* (2010) that "Recent models attempting to explain political orientation have brought the influence of personality to the fore". The "Personality" as defined by the American Psychological Association refers to "Individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving". Thus, political orientation of teachers has the role in transforming the kind of instructional materials they use in classrooms.

Also, social background of the teachers' has influence on the way they think of technology. According to Erikson and Goldthorpe (2002) this is the "Individuals parent occupation", which could either be farming, teaching, engineering and medicine to mention few. This shows that a teachers' up bringing could determine his or her level of familiarity with learning materials. Let me emphasise that some of the instructional technologies are supposed to be utilised in schools at different levels. Additionally, "Educational level is highly correlated with social background" (Jonsson 1988; Jonsson and Erikson 1997a; Jonsson and Erikson 1997b; Jonsson 2001; Carlsson 2010). So, one would assume that the teachers' with higher social background may have better orientation of podcast technologies.

Cultural orientation can influence the teachers' behaviour to either use or reject a podcast for instruction. Also, it was "hypothesised that cultural orientation not only indirectly, but also directly influences individuals intention" (Cheng and Liou 2011). In addition, "Culture have been found to connote diversity and was viewed to be very sensitive matter that could result to human failure" (Ricks 1993). This implies that adequate monitoring of the instructors' culture in schools in Nigeria is necessary where educators comes from different tribes and speak different languages. Although, English Language is the medium of instruction in all educational establishment in the Country and serves as a means to unite people in the face of the varied culture. In my opinion, by producing media that meets individual culture the level of understanding would improve because it would meet each person's values and beliefs that differ. This is evident in some Countries in Europe and Asia and for instance, if Britain, America, Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and China can produce innovative equipment in their own language for teaching and learning processes, then Nigerians also should emulate this idea.

2.1.5 *Adapting a Theoretical Framework for Orientation*

This study adapts a framework known as the "Multidimensional Model of Innovation Orientation" (MMIO), for focus on teachers orientation of podcast in relationship to their "Religious, Political, Social and Cultural" background (Siguaw *et al.* 2006; Crossan and Apaydin 2010; Liu 2010; Hsu and Burns 2012; Ho *et al.* 2015; Grina *et al.* 2016). The framework was defined as "Composed of a learning philosophy, strategic direction and trans-functional beliefs that directs all organisational strategies and actions including those embedded in the formal and informal systems, behaviours, market, employee competencies and processes of the firm to promote innovative thinking and facilitate successful development, evolution and execution of innovations" (Siguaw *et al.* 2006).

Let me emphasise that this framework is more business oriented because of the fundamental ideas of employee and market competencies. Additionally, a teacher in school is synonymous to an employee in any other organisation who would teach with podcast, with diverse orientation and has varied competencies. For instance, some of the teachers that taught me in high school were employees of the State Government with varied coordination and skills. If this framework showcase "Innovation orientation as technological superiority in firms" (Berthon *et al.* 1999). Thus, it would provide a means of understanding the standard of educators of a school over others in terms of instructional resources utilisation.

Lastly, in order to understand the teachers' orientation one has to realise that it so wide. So, in this brief literature review some attempts were made in clarifying the meaning by using selected factors. Also, the merits and demerits were addressed and a framework for orientation was reviewed by discussing the possible ways it would fit the context of this enquiry. Additionally, the reason for the research was clarified because the topic would have been of some other kind. However, these review does not represent everything on this topic because it is small scale.

3 Discussions

Evidence from literature reviewed shows that teachers' orientation of podcast is multifaceted. Although, this was viewed in terms of four factors that draws on the educators background. The reason being that some teachers have no previous knowledge with this instructional technology based on their "Religious, Political, Social and Cultural" views. Similarly, "For most students podcasting is a new technology" because their tutors do not utilise the media (Edirisingha *et al.* 2007). Moreover, in the same study "Only 9% of respondents was found to have previous experiences with podcasts in an enquiry that involved selected UK higher education learners (Ibid). Though, the awareness of podcast seems to have increased because of the findings of Mitra who advocates a

“Self Organised Learning Environment” (SOLE) (Dolan *et al.* 2013). But, there is still some gap to fill in Africa, especially in Nigeria school environment that still depends on old instructional materials as observed by various studies (Okobia 2011; Olayinka 2016).

However, some researchers have a different view on the factors that may affect the peoples’ orientation of podcast. In some studies it was observed that “For many students lack of time was a main reason for not listening to podcasts” (Edirisingha *et al.* 2007). Also, “Not being aware of the availability of podcasts online, technical difficulties and irrelevance perceived to learning of the module contained in the podcast” contributes to the issues responsible for resolving to alternative media in classrooms (Ibid). Consequently, the teachers’ should be enlightened about their role when using podcast, just like the Grannies in “Schools in the Cloud” who encourage the learners’ in their learning process as stressed by Mitra.

Historically, podcast was created for news and entertainment since the invention of Web 2.0 in the 21st century (Edirisingha *et al.* 2007). Nonetheless, several authors had been looking for ways to adapt this technology for education (Ibid). Although, there are indications that some Nigerians do create podcasts, which are not for formal setting because they are mostly in the form of music, advertisement to mention few. Also, some scholars have developed theoretical frameworks and for instance a “Model of how podcasts helped students learning was designed to show the applicability of this media in schools” for the students’ learning (Ibid). Notwithstanding, there seems to be few frameworks on teachers’ orientation for podcast and it is depicted in this study as follows.

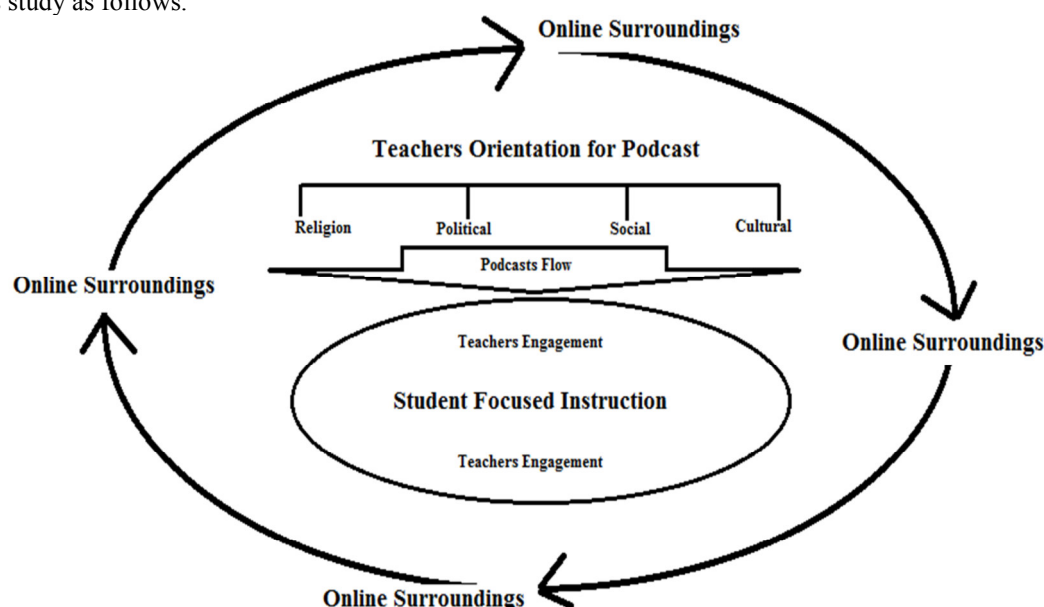


Figure 1: Adapted Inward Framework on Teachers Orientation for Podcast
 Source: (Mitra *et al.* 2005; Siguaw *et al.* 2006)

This model was adapted from MMIO framework and the teachers’ use of podcast is “Innovative” because some podcasting frameworks seem to have failed to put their issues in the fore of the instructional design. So, this message could be assumed to have looked “Inward” to a local Nigerian setting in providing a more appealing plan to be considered for the instructors’ use of podcast. Also, religiously, politically, socially and culturally the “Elderly” are positioned as esteems in Nigeria and this is a design that puts the educator in such position. According to Aristotle, a students’ mind is like a “Tabularasa” which connotes an empty sheet that would always need guidance. Thus, the learners’ should not be left unattended to when exposed to podcast because they may be distracted.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

After a brief literature review and discussions, it is obvious that the teachers’ orientation for podcast determines their familiarity with this media, especially in a developing country context like Nigeria. So, instructors with high orientation would be more conversant and versatile in podcast production and utilisation. However, educators with low orientation may find it difficult in using this technology. Thus, it is recommended that adequate podcast orientation is given to tutors in Nigeria schools because it was observed that some of them have little concerns of this media based on their “Religious, Political, Social and Cultural” beliefs.

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